

## **Reduce Emissions from the Natural Gas Distribution Network**

Methane is the main component of natural gas. Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas (GHG), over 20 times stronger than the most common GHG, carbon dioxide. Methane leaks from gas pipeline/transmission networks, gas distribution networks, and natural gas storage.

The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) is working with Sussex Economics Advisors on a review of natural gas distribution expansion, including a task to determine the CO<sub>2</sub> reduction from converting heating from oil to natural gas. In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) awarded a 9-month contract (with the possibility of a 6-month extension) to ICF in October 2013, to assist DPU in helping to quantify the amount of natural gas that is lost or unaccounted for, either intentionally or unintentionally, during distribution, in order to review and potentially identify methods and procedures to reduce methane emissions.

The results of these two studies, in concert with other DOER work on the potential to use renewable thermal energy in Massachusetts, will assist the Commonwealth in understanding the interaction between renewable thermal use, possible natural gas system expansion and methane leakage from natural gas distribution pipelines.